



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Tracing Service
Inscribed on the International Register in 2013
Memory of the World



ITS

International Tracing Service
Service International de Recherches
Internationaler Suchdienst

Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice

On 26 August 2008, the directorate of the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen decided to adopt the regulations and guidelines for safeguarding good scientific practice that had been compiled by the German Research Foundation (DFG) general meeting on 17 June 1998. The staff at ITS is obliged to adhere to the guidelines of good scientific practice. ITS declares that the following specific regulations for safeguarding good scientific practice have been established at its facility and asserts that they are consistently adhered to.

1. Central Principles

Within the scope of its authority, ITS shall ensure that its academic staff and other employees at its facility adhere to the principles of good scientific practice. These principles foresee that

- work is carried out according to the regulations in the respective academic field which are accepted as a scientific standard;
- the intellectual property of others is not tampered with;
- the scholarly work of others is not interfered;
- findings are questioned and self-critically analysed

2. Scientific Misconduct

Scientific misconduct is defined as conscious or gross negligent misrepresentation, the infringement of intellectual property rights or the otherwise wilful impairment of others' research work. In particular, the term of "misconduct" is employed in the following cases:

- The unauthorised exploitation of others' scientific findings, hypotheses, doctrines or para-digms with the assumption of authorship (plagiarism)
- The unauthorised exploitation of others' paradigms and ideas, particularly as an assessor and adviser for scientific work
- The falsification of the contents of others' scholarly work
- The unauthorised publication and unauthorised accessibility to the scholarly findings of others
- The unfounded specification of authorship or co-authorship in the case of involvement as a so-called honorary author
- Misrepresentation (fabrication of data; falsification of data, e.g. through the non-disclosed selection or rejection of undesirable findings; through manipulation of a description or figure)

3. Principles of Good Scientific Work

- All authors carry the responsibility for collective publication if their contributions are not specifically identified by their name.
- Working materials, findings and documents of others may not be tampered with. They may not be removed, damaged, destroyed or modified without authorisation.

In addition, the following principles are to be safeguarded, particularly in the case of empirical research:

- disclosure of applied methodology, provided it is unknown to the academic community;
- description of research findings in such that their review is possible;
- thorough documentation of all data relevant to publication, provided it has been collected within the scope of the underlying research work;
- congruence of the described research findings to the researched data;
- safe and maintainable storage of primary data from one's own research work for ten years at the facility in which the data was created, provided this data is the basis of publication.

4. Accountability in Management and Mentoring

- The education and advancement of young scientists and scholars must be given special attention. The guidelines for good scientific practice are to be conveyed to young scientists and scholars.
- Work groups are to be organised in such that supervisors are specifically assigned and their availability to work group members is ensured. Provisions for quality control and dispute settlement are to be made.
- Dependent researchers are to work under the supervision and direction of a head researcher.

5. Performance and Assessment Criteria

At ITS, in research and education, particularly in the case of promotions, hiring and appointments, originality and quality take precedence over quantity

Policy for Cases of Suspected Misconduct

6. Trusted Third Party

1. Based on the recommendation of the divisional heads of "Archive" and "Research", the management of ITS appoints independent trusted third parties/contact persons and representatives from the respective areas, which staff can turn to in cases of conflict or issues concerning suspected scientific misconduct. In the case of bias or if a trusted third party is prevented, his or her representative steps in place.
2. The trusted third parties are to counsel those who turn to them. They forward any accusations of scientific misconduct to the committee appointed by management, while ensuring confidentiality for the protection of the informants and people involved. The trusted third parties shall file an anonymous report to management once a year.

7. Research Commission

1. Management appoints a research commission for the clarification of scientific misconduct. Academic staff/division heads from each of the two divisions ("Archive" and "Research") and their respective representatives are duly convened as members of the commission for the duration of three years. In the case of bias or if a commission member is prevented, his or her appointed representative takes over his or her tasks.
2. The research commission appoints one of its members as its chair. The research commission can consult other suitable people for advice.
3. The research commission also becomes active upon receiving a direct indication of scientific misconduct.

8. General Procedure Regulations

1. The research commission is to clarify the issues it is approached with in accordance with its options and in consideration of the appropriate juridical regulations including disciplinary law in free consideration of evidence. It deliberates in non-public hearings. Further details of the procedure are determined according to its best judgement. Deadlines are to be determined for statements, hearings, negotiations and decisions and, provided they are not stipulated in the following, are to be set in such that a prompt procedure is warranted.
2. The right to a fair hearing of those involved is to be protected. If they so desire, they are entitled - as are informants - to demand a private hearing.

9. Preliminary Proceedings

1. As soon as the research commission learns of concrete suspicious facts of scientific misconduct, it offers the person in question a chance to respond within two weeks of the accusation. The incriminating and exculpatory facts and evidence are to be documented in writing.
2. All information about the person involved, statements made by the person involved, and knowledge gained in any other manner are to be treated with strict confidentiality until culpable misconduct has been proven.
3. Upon receipt of the statement by the person in question or if the deadline has lapsed, the research commission will decide within two weeks — and disclose its reasoning to the person in question and the informants — whether the preliminary proceedings are to be terminated if insufficient evidence of misconduct was found, or if a formal investigation procedure is to instigated.

10. Formal Investigation

1. The chairperson of the research commission shall inform management of its decision to open a formal investigation procedure.
2. The research commission conducts an official investigation of the misconduct issue. In doing so, it may solicit statements from any academic staff members or other people involved and ask them to verbally bring these statements forward; the person in question has the opportunity to attend the verbal debate.
3. The research commission reports to management about the results of its work and proposes a resolution to the misconduct case. In the case of ascertained scientific misconduct, it is to make a suggestion to management for further action.
4. The procedure before the research commission is not a substitution for any other statutory procedures (e.g. procedures pertaining to labour law, civil proceedings or criminal cases).

11. Management's Decision

1. Based on the report and recommendation made by the research commission, management decides whether the procedure is to be terminated or if scientific misconduct has been sufficiently proven. In the latter case, management also decides on the consequences.
2. Depending on the severity of proven misconduct, management can impose the following sanctions: verbal warning, written warning, letter of admonition, ordinary or extraordinary dismissal. By request of the board of directors, the person in question is to correct or withdraw the publications that have been proven incorrect.
3. Both the person in question and the informant are to be informed of the decision. The underlying reasons for this decision shall be stated immediately in writing.

12. Report to the ITS International Committee

In its annual report, the director of ITS informs the ITS International Committee of any official investigations by the research commission and respective decisions made by management in cases of scientific misconduct.